River and in Manchuria. There was also a black pottery culture. The precise connections between the continuous development of which the Shang constitutes the earliest known phase and these primitive cultures have still to be determined.

The Shang was replaced by the Chou, The latter triumphed in a trial of arms, the traditional date being toward the close of the second millennium before the Christian era. The Chou was possibly a new invader from the West seeking control of the fertile North China plain and differing somewhat in culture from the Shang. Apparently the advent of the Chou was accompanied by no marked revolution in culture. However, in the course of the centuries in which the Chou supplied the titular rulers, striking developments occurred. The area within the purview of the Chinese political organization expanded, reaching south into the valley of the Yangtze and north into the highlands of Shansi. The authority of the Chou monarchs diminished almost to the vanishing point, although long after they ceased to have an effective military control those who inherited the Chou title of *wang* continued to hold a religious preeminence and by a convenient fiction were still the fountain of titles and of legitimacy. The actual power passed more and more into the hands of a varying number of territorial magnates and the political structure resembled that of European feudalism. Much of the time the feudal states waged war on one another and on the neighboring non-Chinese peoples. There were cities, commerce, money, art, and a certain degree of luxury for the ruling classes. A sharp distinction existed between the aristocracy and the proletariat.

Original thinking emerged, some of it profound, and the third

quarter of the first millennium before Christ spanned one of the most creative periods in the intellectual history of China. The philosophers chiefly, but by no means exclusively, centered their attention upon the achievement of an ideal human society. Political and economic theories were, accordingly, warmly debated. The chief schools were four in number. The Confucianists insisted upon the maintenance of the traditional religious and political ceremonies and organization, but purified and kept just through the example of educated and righteous rulers and officials who had the welfare of the populace at heart. The Taoists believed in having mankind conform to what was denominated